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What Can You Read Into a Book?

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"HE DID NOT CARE whom he killed, as long as he killed someone and got his name in the paper," says Natalya Pusjhkin Scott of her husband in the new Bantam paperback thriller "22 Fires."

Weeks ago this column reported that publication of this Jerome Agel-Eugene Boe novel might cause headlines. Now that I've read it. I know *why* it should cause them. But given the wariness of people bombarded by conspiracy theories concerning the murder of John F. Kennedy, the book may wrongly be termed sensational and exploitive. It isn't. "22 Fires" is extremely well written, researched and full of shocking details. The book is a fictional synthesis of over-looked and suppressed information from the Warren Commission findings. Thus, "22 Fires" is not just *a roman a clef* cashing in on the death of a President, but a way for Agel and Boe to present their dynamic conclusion. It is a shocker — to wit, that the novel's assassin did intend to kill someone, that he acted alone as a confused psychotic, but that the person he meant to kill was the First Lady, not her husband.

All these facts have been on the record for 14 years, but not many people pay any attention to them. The grass always seems to be greener on the famed Dealey Plaza "grassy knoll" where conspiracy theorists like to gather.

The authors refuse to be quoted because they have to maintain a posture that their book's "President Lancaster," a man murdered in New York rather than in Dallas, is not meant to be JFK. However, there is no question that they have simply decided to present the facts as fiction in order to get ther point across. There is no way to read "22 Fires" as anything but a real story.

Today's opening quote is something **Marina Oswald** actually has been saying for 14 years while nobody follows up or pays any attention to her. The title of the book is the expression she used to the Warren Commission, stating the heat of the anger she felt at her husband before the President's assassination. Some of the documents Agel and Boe quote have never been published, and the book bears out their theory of the killer as a psychotic sniper who hated women and saw his own mother and wife in the crosshairs of his rifle. The authors point out that all the FBI tests with Oswald's gun failed to achieve any accuracy; the gun always fired high and to the right of the aiming point. (Mrs. Kennedy was on the President's left.)

It takes courage to try to say what really happened in Dallas or mythical New York — the conspiracy theories are so popular. But **Bobby** and **Teddy Kennedy** believed that their brother was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald. "22